

COPPER MOLYBDENUM ELECTROLESS DEPOSITION PROCESS AND
MATERIALS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to metallic
5 deposition materials and processes, and more specifically
to materials and processes for metallic electroless
deposition.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 Metallic diffusion and/or drift between different
metallic layers, or metallic and semiconductor layers
induce changes over time in the properties of the layer
into which diffusion and/or drift has occurred. These
properties include electrical, mechanical, thermal,
15 visual, physical and chemical properties. There is great
importance to many industries to produce products having
both constant properties over time and high reliability.
These industries include, but are not limited to
semiconductor, microelectronics, electro-finishing,
20 aeronautic, space and motor industries. Products
requiring high reliability include, for example,
semiconductor chips, ULSI products, jewelry, nuts and
bolts, and airplane wings and car parts. Typically, the
smaller the product, the more pronounced an effect of a
25 localized change in a property of a layer.

In the semiconductor industry, the diffusion of
metals into adjacent layers is well documented. For
example, copper diffuses into silicon materials. To
prevent such diffusion, a barrier layer between the
30 copper and silicon may be deposited (US Patent 5,695,810
to Dubin et al.).

The microelectronics industry constantly aims to
reduce the size of components and the distance between

interconnects, yet, simultaneously, tries to increase the number of electronic features per unit area. Thus, there is an increasing requirement for more accurate and well-controlled metal deposition techniques. For
5 example, with decreasing size of copper / SiO_2 interconnects, standard processes known in the art for metal deposition cannot typically meet the new requirements for precision. There is therefore an urgent need for better designed processes, materials and
10 manufacturing methods for metal deposition.

One of the concerns in manufacturing and processing copper, amongst other metals, is its corrosion, before and after Chemical-Mechanical Polishing (CMP), which may induce deterioration in the electrical and mechanical
15 properties of the copper. Another concern is the migration of copper onto the inter-level dielectric and the silicon substrate (see US 5,674,787 to Zhao, et al.) Copper contamination in inter-level dielectrics weakens the dielectrics' mechanical properties and reduces
20 electrical reliability. Copper is also a deep level dopant in silicon, which may lower the minority carriers lifetime and may enhance leakage currents to significant levels.

Copper has poor adhesion to most dielectrics that
25 are used in ULSI manufacturing, such as, but not limited to, SiO_2 , SiOF , polyimide and low-K dielectrics. Therefore, the implementation of a copper encapsulation method is desirable. One possible solution is to wrap the Cu lines with special thin metallic cladding that serves
30 as a corrosion resistance layer; a diffusion barrier; and as an adhesion promoter.

There are many materials that are known to be good barrier to diffusion. Usually they are refractory metals, such as Ta, W and Mo, or refractory metal nitride thin

films such as TiN, TaN, and W_xN_y . The layers can be deposited by conventional physical vapor deposition (PVD), chemical vapor deposition (CVD) or Atomic Layer Chemical Vapor Deposition (ALCVD).

5 Alternative methods for depositing barriers are electroplating and electroless (autocatalytic) deposition of metallic alloys (see US 4,209,331 to Kukanskis, et al.).

10 There is therefore an urgent need to develop novel materials and methods for metallic deposition which overcome diffusion, drift and migration of metallic ions.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of some aspects of the present invention to provide improved materials and processes for providing a barrier layer for metallic layers, such as copper.

In preferred embodiments of the present invention, improved materials and processes are provided for the electroless deposition of copper molybdenum, substantially devoid of alkali metal ions and alkaline earth metal ions.

In further preferred embodiments of the present invention, methods and materials for electroless deposition of copper molybdenum, substantially devoid of alkali metal ions and alkaline earth metal ions, on a single silicon crystal, on a thermal oxide on silicon, and on thin films of copper and cobalt on silicon substrates are provided.

In yet further preferred embodiments of the present invention metallic deposits of copper molybdenum are provided, wherein the deposits are substantially alkali metal free and alkaline earth metal free.

There is thus provided in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention an aqueous bath composition for the electroless deposition of copper molybdenum, including, in addition to water:

- a soluble source of copper ions,
- a soluble source of molybdenum ions, and
- a reducing agent including boron,

wherein the composition is adapted to electrolessly produce a copper molybdenum deposit having a resistivity of less than 30 microhm.cm.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of

the present invention, there is provided a composition according wherein the copper molybdenum deposit has a resistivity of less than 10 microhm.cm.

5 Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the composition is substantially devoid of alkali metals and alkaline earth metals.

10 Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition wherein the soluble source of copper ions includes copper sulfate.

15 Furthermore, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the copper sulfate includes copper sulfate pentahydrate ($\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$) at a concentration of 2-10 g/l.

20 Yet further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the copper sulfate pentahydrate is at a concentration of 3-5 g/l.

Still further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the soluble source of molybdenum ions includes molybdic acid monohydrate ($\text{H}_2\text{MoO}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$).

25 Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the wherein molybdic acid monohydrate is present at a concentration of 0-5 g/l.

30 Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the wherein molybdic acid monohydrate is present at a concentration of 1.5-3 g/l.

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a

composition, wherein the reducing agent is selected from dimethylamineborane (DMAB), sodium hydroborate, potassium hydroborate, sodium borohydride, potassium borohydride, a borazane, and borane pyridine complex.

5 Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition according to claim 10, wherein the borazane is of the formula $R_xNH_y.BH_{(x+y)}$,

wherein x is an integer between 0 and 3,

10 wherein y is an integer between 0 and 3, and

wherein R is an organic group selected from methyl and ethyl.

Yet further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a
15 composition, wherein the reducing agent includes dimethylamineborane.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the reducing agent includes a dimethylamineborane
20 complex.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the dimethylamineborane complex is present at a concentration of 5-20 g/l.

25 Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the dimethylamineborane complex is present at a concentration of 7-12 g/l.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of
30 the present invention, there is provided a composition, further including tetra-methyl ammonium hydroxide (TMAH) at a concentration of 50-100 g/l.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition

according to claim 1, further including ammonium hydroxide.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition,
5 wherein the ammonium hydroxide is at a concentration of less than 20 ml/l.

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the pH is between 8-12.

10 Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the pH is between 9-11.

Yet further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a
15 composition, wherein the composition is adapted to produce a copper molybdenum deposit having at least one of the following properties:

(i) a change in reliability as defined by mean-time-to-failure during electro-migration testing of more than
20 a factor of ten,

(ii) a void density of less than $0.5/\text{cm}^2$,

(iii) a grain boundary diffusion coefficient of less than $10^{-8.3} \cdot e^{-1.25\text{eV}/kT}$,

(iv) a grain boundary diffusion coefficient, D_0 , of
25 $10^{-8.3} \text{ cm}^2/\text{s}$, and

(v) a distribution of grain sizes having a standard deviation of less than 3 nm.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a
30 composition, wherein the composition is adapted to electrolessly deposit copper molybdenum at a temperature of less than 60 °C.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the composition is adapted to electrolessly deposit copper molybdenum at a temperature of between
5 40 °C to about 50 °C.

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, further including a surfactant.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment
10 of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the surfactant includes at least one of RE-610 and Triton X-100.

There is thus provided in accordance with another preferred embodiment of the present invention an aqueous
15 bath composition for the electroless deposition of copper molybdenum, including, in addition to water:

a soluble source of copper ions,
a soluble source of molybdenum ions,
a soluble source of citrate ions, and
20 a reducing agent including boron, and

wherein the composition is adapted to electrolessly produce a copper molybdenum deposit having a resistivity of less than 300 microhm.cm.

Furthermore, in accordance with a preferred
25 embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition according to claim 26, wherein the soluble source of citrate ions includes sodium citrate.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition,
30 wherein the copper molybdenum deposit has a resistivity of less than 100 microhm.cm.

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the composition is substantially

devoid of alkali metals and alkaline earth metals.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the soluble source of copper ions includes copper sulfate.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the copper sulfate includes copper sulfate pentahydrate ($\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$) at a concentration of 2-10 g/l.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the copper sulfate pentahydrate is at a concentration of 3-5 g/l.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the source of molybdenum includes molybdic acid monohydrate ($\text{H}_2 \text{MoO}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$).

Furthermore, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the wherein molybdic acid monohydrate is present at a concentration of 0-5 g/l.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein molybdic acid monohydrate is present at a concentration of 1.5-3 g/l.

Yet, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the reducing agent is selected from sodium borohydride, potassium borohydride, borane pyridine complex and borazanes including but not limited to, dimethylamineborane (DMAB), borane triethylamine (TEAB), DMAB-complex and TEAB-complex.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition,

wherein the borazane is of the formula $R_xNH_y.BH_{(x+y)}$,
wherein x is an integer between 0 and 3,
wherein y is an integer between 0 and 3, and
wherein R is an organic group selected from methyl
5 and ethyl

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the reducing agent includes dimethylamineborane.

10 Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the reducing agent includes a dimethylamineborane complex.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment
15 of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the dimethylamineborane complex is present at a concentration of 5-20 g/l.

Yet further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a
20 composition according to claim 39, wherein the dimethylamineborane complex is present at a concentration of 7-12 g/l.

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a
25 composition, further including tetra-methyl ammonium hydroxide (TMAH) at a concentration of 50-100 g/l.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, further including ammonium hydroxide.

30 Furthermore, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the ammonium hydroxide is at a concentration of less than 20 ml/l.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of

the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the pH is between 8-12.

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the pH is between 9-11.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the composition is adapted to produce a copper molybdenum deposit having at least one of the following properties:

(i) a change in reliability as defined by mean-time-to-failure during electro-migration testing of more than a factor of ten,

(ii) a void density of less than $0.5/\text{cm}^2$,

(iii) a grain boundary diffusion coefficient of less than $10^{-8.3} \cdot e^{-1.25\text{ev}/kT}$,

(iv) a grain boundary diffusion coefficient, D_0 of $10^{-8.3} \text{ cm/s}$, and

(v) a distribution of grain sizes having a standard deviation of less than 3 nm.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the composition is adapted to electrolessly deposit copper molybdenum at a temperature of less than 60°C .

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the composition is adapted to electrolessly deposit copper molybdenum at a temperature of between 40°C to about 50°C .

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a

composition, further including a surfactant.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a composition, wherein the surfactant includes at least one of RE-610
5 and Triton X-100.

There is thus provided in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention a copper molybdenum film electrolessly deposited on a surface from a bath including a composition mentioned hereinabove, and
10 wherein a resistivity of the film is less than 10 microOhm.cm.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a copper molybdenum film, wherein the thickness of the film is
15 less than approximately one micron.

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a copper molybdenum film, wherein the thickness of the film is less than approximately 0.1 micron.

20 Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a copper molybdenum film, wherein a resistivity of the film is less than 8 microOhm.cm.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of
25 the present invention, there is provided a copper molybdenum film, wherein the film includes 0-3% molybdenum.

Furthermore, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a
30 copper molybdenum film, wherein the film includes 1-3% molybdenum.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of

the present invention, there is provided a copper molybdenum film, wherein the film acts as a diffusion barrier for a metal on the surface, wherein the metal is selected from copper, gold, platinum, palladium, silver,
5 nickel, cadmium, indium and aluminum.

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a copper molybdenum film, wherein the film acts as an oxidation barrier.

10 Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a copper molybdenum film, wherein the film acts as a corrosion barrier.

There is thus provided in accordance with a
15 preferred embodiment of the present invention a copper molybdenum film, electrolessly deposited on a surface from a bath including the composition mentioned herein, wherein a resistivity of the film is less than 300 microOhm.cm.

20 Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided film, wherein the thickness of the film is less than approximately one micron.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment
25 of the present invention, there is provided a film, wherein the thickness of the film is less than approximately 0.1 micron.

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred
embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a,
30 wherein the resistivity of the film is less than 100 microOhm.cm.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a film, wherein

the resistivity of the film is less than 10 microOhm.cm.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a film, wherein the film includes 0-3% molybdenum.

5 Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a film, wherein the film includes 1-3% molybdenum.

10 Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a film, wherein the film acts as a diffusion barrier for a metal on the surface, wherein the metal is selected from copper, gold, platinum, palladium, silver, nickel, cadmium, indium and aluminum.

15 Furthermore, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a film, wherein the film acts as an oxidation barrier.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a film, wherein the film acts as a corrosion barrier.

20 There is thus provided in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention a method for the electroless deposition of copper molybdenum on a surface, including:

25 electrolessly depositing copper molybdenum on the surface, substantially in the absence of alkali metal ions so as to produce a copper molybdenum layer having a resistivity of less than 300 microohm.cm.

30 Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method, wherein the resistivity of the copper molybdenum layer is less than 100 microohm.cm.

Preferably, the resistivity is less than 10 microohm.cm.

More preferably, the resistivity is less than 8

microohm.cm.

Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method further including activating the surface, and
5 wherein activating the surface occurs at least partially under dry process conditions.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method, wherein the surface includes silicon.

10 Furthermore, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method, wherein the surface includes copper.

Yet further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a
15 method, wherein activating the surface further includes depositing at least one metal on the surface.

Furthermore, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method, wherein the at least one metal is selected from
20 aluminum, cobalt, copper and titanium.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method further including removing at least partially some of the at least one metal.

25 Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method, further including activating the surface, and wherein activating the surface occurs, at least partially, under wet process conditions.

30 Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method, wherein activating the surface includes at least one of the following steps:

(a) degreasing the surface,
(b) removing at least one oxide from the surface,
(c) fluoride etching the surface,
5 (d) rinsing the surface,
(e) activating the surface with palladium, and
(f) pre-dipping the surface in a solution including at least one of a reducing agent and a complexing agent.

10 Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method, wherein electrolessly depositing includes electrolessly depositing a film having a thickness of less than approximately one micron.

15 Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method, wherein the thickness of the film is less than approximately 0.1 micron.

20 Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method, wherein the film includes 0-3 % molybdenum.

25 Furthermore, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method, wherein depositing the copper molybdenum is at a temperature of less than 60°C.

Also, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method, wherein the temperature is from around 40°C to 50°C.

30 Additionally, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a

method, wherein depositing the copper molybdenum occurs at a pH of around 9 up to 11.

Further, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method,
5 wherein the pH is around 9.5 to 10.5.

There is thus provided in accordance with another preferred embodiment of the present invention method for the electroless deposition of copper molybdenum on a surface, including:

10 electrolessly depositing copper molybdenum on the surface in the presence of citrate ions so as to produce a copper molybdenum layer having a resistivity of less than 300 microhm.cm.

The present invention will be more fully understood
15 from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments thereof, taken together with the drawings, in which:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a graph of the thickness of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo films from an alkali metal-free copper-molybdenum electrolyte as a function of time, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a graph of thickness of electrolessly deposited Co-Mo films from a copper-molybdenum citrate electrolyte as a function of time, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 3 shows SIMS profiles of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo films obtained from an alkali metal-free copper-molybdenum electrolyte and from a copper-molybdenum citrate electrolyte, in accordance with preferred embodiments of the present invention;

Fig. 4 is a SIMS profile of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo films obtained from a copper-molybdenum citrate electrolyte, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 5 is a SIMS profile of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo films obtained from an alkali metal-free electrolyte, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 6 is an AFM image of electrolessly deposited pure Cu film from alkali metal free bath, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 7 is an AFM image of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo film from a citrate bath with oxalic acid (1 g/l), in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 8 is an AFM image of electrolessly deposited

Cu-Mo film from an alkali metal-free solution, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

5 Fig. 9 is an AFM image of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo film from an alkali metal-free solution comprising 10 ml/l ammonia, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

10 Fig. 10a-10d are SEM micrographs of the electrolessly deposited films: (a) pure Cu from alkali metal-free solution, (b) Cu-Mo layer from citrate bath, (c) Cu-Mo layer from alkali metal-free solution without ammonia, (d) Cu-Mo layer from alkali metal-free solution with ammonia, in accordance with preferred embodiments of the present invention; and,

15 Fig. 11 is a graph showing the effect of the molar ratio $[Mo^{++}]/[Cu^{++}]$ in an electrolyte on the molybdenum concentration in the solid produced from a citrate electrolyte, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Novel bath compositions for electroless deposition of copper and copper molybdenum are provided (Table 1).

5 A first bath composition appears in Table 1a. In contrast to the prior art bath compositions, this bath composition is substantially devoid of alkali metal ions.

10 A second bath composition (henceforth, "citrate bath or citrate electrolyte) for electroless deposition of copper and copper molybdenum appears in Table 1b.

Table 1

Table 1a. Copper-molybdenum alkali metals free solution (CuMo-amf)			Table 1b. Copper-molybdenum citrate solution		
Component	Concentration		Component	Concentration	
	gr/l	mol/l		gr/l	mol/l
CuSO ₄ .5H ₂ O	3	0.012	CuSO ₄ .5H ₂ O	7.5	0.03
H ₂ MoO ₄	1.8	0.01	H ₂ MoO ₄ .H ₂ O	1.8-5.4	0.01-0.03
EDTA _[SL1]	6.6	0.023	3Na-citrate	44.1	0.154
TMAH	80	0.88	Oxalic acid	1	0.008
NH ₄ OH	5-10 ml/l	0.035-0.07	KOH	to pH=7.7-7.9	
Additives	0.015		DMAB-complex	9	0.15
pH	10-10.5		pH	7.7-7.9	
Temperature	40-50°C		Temperature	55-60°C	
DMAB-complex	9	0.15			

15 Copper molybdenum and copper layers of 40-300 nm layers were deposited from two novel aqueous electroless baths, whose composition and operating conditions appear hereinabove in Table 1. All the chemicals that were used were of analytical purity grade. All chemicals used were
20 obtained from produced by MERCK, Darmstadt, Germany.

The copper molybdenum alkali metal-free solution (Table 1a comprises a copper sulfate solution containing ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA) as a complexing agent and molybdic acid monohydrate as a source of molybdenum ions. The reducing agent was dimethylamine borane complex. The solution pH was typically 9.5 to 10.5. The operating temperature was typically in the range from 40 °C to 50 °C. In our work this electrolyte was specified as CuMo-amf solution. The copper molybdenum citrate solution (Table 1b) comprises a copper sulfate-based solution with sodium citrate as a complexing agent and molybdic acid as a source of molybdenum ions. Dimethylamine borane complex is used as a reducing agent. The value of pH was in the range from 7.6 to 7.9. The working temperature was kept around 50°C.

Example 1. Electroless deposition of films from copper-molybdenum baths

Both baths (as in Table 1a and Table 1b) were used to deposit copper molybdenum on a surface as follows:

Silicon wafers were used as the underlayers in this investigation. The Cu-Mo films were deposited on ~1 cm² square single crystal silicon substrates that were cut from (100), 4" diameter, p-type, Si wafers with 10 Ω·cm resistivity and Si-epi wafers 1-0-0 with resistivity 8-20 Ω·cm. The samples were prepared as follows:

First, the wafers were degreased in hot (70-90°C) NH₄OH : H₂O₂ : DI water (1: 1: 6) by vol. for 5 min. to remove organic residues. Second, dipping in hot (70-90°C) HCl: H₂O₂: DI water (1: 1: 5) by vol. for 5 min. to remove metallic oxides. Next, the samples were treated for 2 minutes at room temperature in a buffer solution of 48% HF : 40%NH₄F (1 : 10) by vol. to remove silicon dioxide. After that samples surface was activated in 11% Na₂S₂O₃ solution. Finally, the silicon surface was activated in

Pd-activation solution The palladium activation solution is presented in Table 2

TABLE 2 BATH COMPOSITION FOR PD ACTIVATION

5

CHEMICALS	CONCENTRATION
PdCl ₂	0.2 g/l
HCl	2-10 ml/l
CH ₃ COOH	500 ml/l
HF	5 ml/l

The samples were rinsed in DI water after each step.

10 The basic bath properties, i.e. deposition rate, composition and resistivity for both bath compositions (as in Table 1a and Table 1b, were measured.

The thin-films deposited from both bath compositions were analyzed by X-Ray Photoemission Spectroscopy (XPS) and Auger Electron Spectroscopy (AES) methods in a Physical Electronics PHI model 590A tool.

15 The sheet resistance and resistivity of the deposited films were measured by In-Line-Four Point Probe and the thickness was determined by a Tencor - "Alpha-step 500" profilometer.

20 The topography and average height profiles were obtained by Digital Instruments atomic-force-microscope (AFM) (Auto Probe CP, Park Scientific Instrument). All reported measurements were carried out at room temperature.

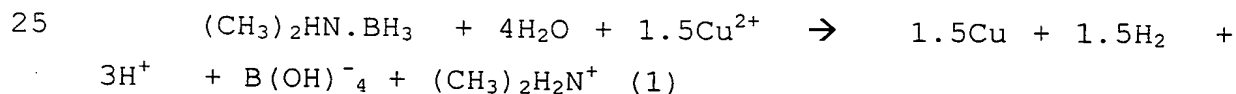
25 In prior art studies (at pH>12), Mo-compounds were used for electroless deposition of copper as the stabilizer in parallel with Pb and Sn-ions, organic compounds of S, Se, Te, Tl and certain of organic acids.

This means that the Mo acts as the inhibitor and escapes detection in copper solid.

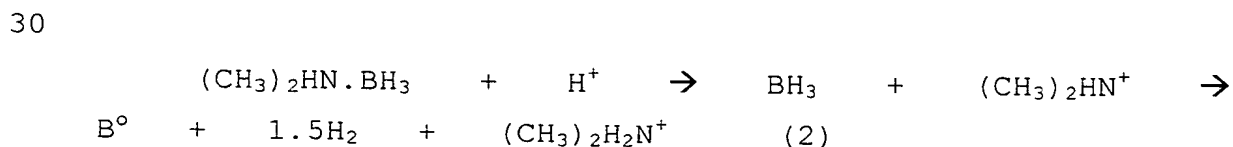
It is known in the art that alloying of Cu with Mo is feasible in metallurgy. Thus, there should be a good chance of obtaining a copper-molybdenum deposit or layer by chemical (electroless) deposition. To attain electroless deposition, the value of pH is needs to be in the range 7-10. A very strong reducing agent such as DMAB, can be used for this purpose. Though experiments were performed employing several other reducing agents, it was found that copper molybdenum deposition process only took place in the presence of DMAB..

As a general rule, deposits obtained from baths with DMAB as a reducing agent contain boron. Without wishing to be bound by this theory, and without limiting this invention thereto, it is proposed that the reduction of boron is caused by the catalytic decomposition of reducing agent (equation 2) The hydrogen liberated at the cathode in process of Me-reducing (equation 1) favors the reducing of boron (equation 2).

The overall reaction of electroless Cu-deposition by the use of DMAB-complex as a reducing agent can be written as:



The decomposition of reducing agent can be described by the equation 2 :



It is seen that the atomic hydrogen generated by the

reaction 1, releases as gas and does not take part in the reducing of copper. The electrolyte is acidified only by the protons of the water. In this invention, boron was not found by XPS and Auger methods in the deposited layers. It is thus probable that the concentration of boron in the deposited films was less than 0.01 atomic %.

The bath compositions (electrolytes) of the current invention are shown in Table 1. These electrolytes were tested on the feasibility to chemical deposit Cu-Mo films. Deposits were obtained from both aforementioned electrolytes. Copper-molybdenum films deposited from the alkali-metal-free solution were of significantly lower resistivity as compared to layers obtained from citrate solution (Fig. 3). Additionally, the copper molybdenum alkali metal-free electrolyte (Table 1a) was found to be more stable than citrate solution (Table 1b).

It was also discovered that the addition of oxalic ions to citrate electrolyte (Table 1b) accelerated the reaction (Fig. 2).

Addition of ammonia at the rate of 5-15 ml/l to alkali metal-free solution of Table 1a, improved the stability of the electrolyte, possibly by complexing the copper. However,, the concentration of molybdenum in the deposited solid decreased with the addition of ammonia to this electrolyte.

It was further found that the molybdenum concentration in the deposit goes down from 1.26 to 0.5 at.% at a pH of 10.5 with the concomitant addition of ammonia in amounts of 10 ml/l. This could be due to the strong complexing the molybdenum with ammonia. One key parameter for the process is pH value.

Employing the alkali metal-free solution without ammonia, the molybdenum content in the films was 1.26 at.% and 2.72 at.% at pH=10.5 and pH=9.5 respectively.

It was noted that the deposition process at pH=9.5 proceed relatively very slowly.

Reference is now made to Fig. 1, which is a graph of the thickness of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo films from an alkali metal-free copper-molybdenum electrolyte as a function of time.

Copper molybdenum deposits were deposited using the copper-molybdenum alkali metal-free solution (Table 1a). The thin film thickness was measured as a function of time. As can be seen from Fig. 1, the deposition rate of Cu-Mo layers is very nearly equal to deposition rate of pure Cu films from alkali metal-free solution, all factors being the same. The kinetics of deposition process was changed with changing of borohydride-dimethylamine-complex concentration in electrolyte. When the concentration of the reducing agent was halved, the film thickness reached a maximum of 150 nm after 1 min. of the deposition.

Reference is now made to Fig. 2, which a graph of thickness of electrolessly deposited Co-Mo films from a copper-molybdenum citrate electrolyte as a function of time.

Fig.2 shows thickness of Cu-Mo films deposited from citrate bath with different source of hydroxyl ions: KOH, NH₄OH and TMAH and with an H₂MoO₄ concentration of around the range of 0.03M_[SL2]. It can be seen from Fig.2, that deposition rate from this electrolyte with KOH is very slow. In this case, the deposition rate increases with adding of oxalic ions as catalyst to citrate solution with KOH. It can be seen that Cu-Mo films deposited from citrate electrolyte with KOH were better quality compared to Cu-Mo layers obtained from citrate baths with ammonia and TMAH-tetramethylammonium hydroxide_[SL3].

Reference is now made to Fig. 3, which shows SIMS profiles of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo films obtained from an alkali metal-free copper-molybdenum electrolyte and from a copper-molybdenum citrate electrolyte.

5 The resistivity of the deposited on Si substrate Cu-Mo films was measured by In-Line-Four Point Probe. Fig. 3 demonstrates resistivity of electroless deposited films on Si substrate from citrate and alkali metal-free baths as a function of layers thickness. In Fig. 3, it
10 can be seen that resistivity of thin layers deposited from alkali metal-free solution is lower in comparison to resistivity of films obtained from citrate electrolyte. So, resistivity of Cu-Mo films 250nm thick deposited from citrate bath was 270 $\mu\Omega$.cm, resistivity of Cu-Mo layers
15 270 nm thick obtained from alkali metal-free bath was 7.2 $\mu\Omega$.cm.

Reference is now made to Fig. 4, which is a SIMS profile of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo films obtained from a copper-molybdenum citrate electrolyte. Reference is also
20 made to Fig. 5, which is a SIMS profile of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo films obtained from an alkali metal-free electrolyte.

The thin film compositions were measured by standard AES, XPS and SIMS methods, known in the art. Figs.4 and 5
25 show SIMS profile of electrolessly deposited thin Cu-Mo films, obtained from citrate and alkali metals free baths respectively. As can be seen from Figs.4, 5, molybdenum is evenly distributed across the deposited layers.

The molybdenum concentration in deposited films
30 depends on the nature of electrolyte, value of pH and concentration of Mo-ions in deposition bath. The concentration of Mo-ions in alkali metal-free bath was 0.01M. Concentration of molybdenum in deposit depends on pH-value and the availability of ammonia in solution. It

was found that the molybdenum concentration in films obtained from alkali metal-free electrolyte without ammonia was 1.26 atomic percent at a pH of 10.5, and 2.72 atomic percent at a pH of 9.5.

5 The molybdenum concentration in solids deposited at pH=10.5 from the alkali metal-free [SL4]electrolyte without ammonia was 1.26 atomic percent and from solution with ammonia (10ml/l) was 0.5 atomic percent. . The relative amount of molybdenum in the solid obtained from alkali
10 metal-free bath at a pH of 10.5 is 0.5 atomic percent and 1.2 atomic percent for electrolytes without and with ammonia respectively.

 The concentration of molybdenum ions in citrate bath was provided in a range of from 0.01 to 0.03 M. The
15 content of molybdenum in the solid deposited from the citrate electrolyte increases moderately with increasing of molybdenum ions concentration in the electrolyte.

 Reference is now made to Fig. 11, which is a graph showing the effect of the molar ratio $[Mo^{++}]/[Cu^{++}]$ in an
20 electrolyte on the molybdenum concentration in the solid produced from a citrate electrolyte.

 As is shown in Fig. 11, molybdenum ion concentration in film increases from 0.25 atomic percent to 0.65 atomic percent as the molybdenum ion concentration in bath
25 increases from 0.01M to 0.02 M. Further increasing of Mo-content in electrolyte has no effect on Mo-concentration in the deposit.

 As the concentration of Mo-ions in the bath increases from 0.02 M to 0.03 M the concentration of Mo
30 in film reached a maximum of 0.65 atomic percent.

 Reference is now made to Fig. 6, which is an AFM image of electrolessly deposited pure Cu film from alkali metal free bath.

Reference is also made to Fig. 7, which is an AFM image of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo film from a citrate bath with oxalic acid (1 g/l).

Further reference is made to Fig. 8, which is an AFM
5 image of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo film from an alkali metal-free solution.

Reference is additionally made to Fig. 9, which is an AFM image of electrolessly deposited Cu-Mo film from an alkali metal-free solution comprising 10 ml/l ammonia.

10 Figs. 6-9 show the results of a surface scanning study of copper and copper-molybdenum layers deposited from both electrolytes (as in Table 1a and 1b) by atomic force microscopy (AFM). The thickness of such films was in the range of 120-150 nm. Figs. 6-9 demonstrate the AFM
15 images of Cu and Cu-Mo films deposited on Si substrate.

It can be seen that the surface differences are of minor nature and are determined by the character of first seed.

Reference is now made to Fig. 10a-10d, which are SEM
20 micrographs of the electrolessly deposited films: (a) pure Cu from alkali metal-free solution, (b) Cu-Mo layer from a citrate bath, (c) Cu-Mo layer from alkali metal-free solution without ammonia, (d) Cu-Mo layer from alkali metal-free solution with ammonia.

25 The copper and copper-molybdenum films deposited from both electrolytes differ significantly in their morphology as observed by scanning electron microscopy (SEM). Typical SEM top views of deposits are shown in Figs. 10a-10d. As can be seen, the general view of the
30 films being studied is very similar. It should be noted, that the islands size of the deposits decreased moderately from Fig. 10a to Fig. 10d.

Copper-molybdenum (CuMo) thin layers were deposited on Si substrate using the electroless (chemical) method

from both electrolytes: citrate and alkali metal-free. The film morphology of obtained layers was studied by SEM and AFM. Compared to electroless deposited pure copper, copper-molybdenum deposits have smaller grains.

5 Resistivity of as deposited Cu-Mo thin films on Si substrate was very high. The resistivity of Cu-Mo layers thicker than 270 nm were about 7 $\mu\Omega$.cm for alkali metals free solution. Resistivity of pure copper for 170 nm thick was 16 $\mu\Omega$.cm for this electrolyte. Except that the
10 resistivity were much higher for thinner layers deposited from alkali metals free solution. Resistivity of Cu-Mo films obtained from citrate bath was about 160 $\mu\Omega$.cm.

Vacuum annealing allows to improve the resistivity of the deposited from citrate bath copper-molybdenum
15 films with an order of magnitude. Resistivity of obtained from alkali metal-free bath copper-molybdenum films was unaltered after vacuum annealing.

Copper-molybdenum electrolytes are not very stable. Introducing of stabilizer into solution improves its
20 stability and decreases the molybdenum concentration in films at one time. The molybdenum ions act as very strong inhibitors for copper electroless deposition process. Oxygen content in deposited films is very high but it decreases after annealing in vacuum at 340⁰C for 1h.

25 Consequently, copper-molybdenum layers may be used for on-chip interconnects as alternatives to copper.

It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that the present invention is not limited to what has been particularly shown and described hereinabove.

30 Rather, the scope of the present invention includes both combinations and subcombinations of the various features described hereinabove, as well as variations and modifications thereof that are not in the prior art,

which would occur to persons skilled in the art upon reading the foregoing description.